NASA Project Management Challenge 2005

Habits of
NASA Project Managers

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What *is a* Habit?

Webster: *habit, noun.*

1. a. A continual, often involuntary or
   unconscious performance of an activity,
acquired through frequent repetition

b. An established disposition of the mind
or character

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b. An <u>established disposition</u> of the <u>mind</u> or <u>character</u>

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- *Why* is this of interest?
- *Who* identified these habits?
- *What* habits were identified?
- *How* is this information useful?
- *What's* next?

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- *Why* is this of interest?

  - Project managers *are recognized* as the *key* to successful project management

  - NASA project managers are *perceived as* preeminent in the world

  - If others are copying NASA, just *what* are they copying?

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- *Who* identified these habits?

  - Project managers
  - Deputy project managers
  - Team members and others

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- *What* habits were identified?

  Habits identified in NASA Project Managers

  - Management Style
  - Leadership
  - Communication
  - Interactions With People
  - Personal Attributes

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- Management Style

- Project managers

Decisive
Delegates, delegates, delegates
People oriented
Open door policy
Gets good people assigned
Well organized, prepared,
Understands schedules & $$

- Deputies

Delegates
Available
Good with people
Collaborative decisions
Organized - well defined schedule

- Team Members/Others

Decisiveness
MBWA
Willingness to help
Understands trade space

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- Leadership

Project Managers

Servant leader
Understands org. politics
Proven leadership ability

Deputies

Big picture perspective

Team Members/Others

Clear vision & goals
Can be authoritative
Attuned to the environment

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- Communication

Project Managers

Regular meetings
Good negotiator
Tells the bad news
Maintains network with all
Presents clearly & concisely
Open to dissenting opinions

Deputies

Listens
Regular
Frequent
Good meetings, short

Team Members/Others

Listens
Regular
Clear
Keeps all informed
Solicits information

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- Interactions With People

Deputies

Recognizes accomplishments
Encourages in careers
Treats as equals
Holds accountable
Manages expectations
Communicates expectations

Project Managers

Recognizes & rewards
Champions careers
Listens with respect
Celebrates success
Mindful of other's time

Team Members/Others

Recognizes contributions, praises
Caring
Trusting
Involves all

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- Personal Characteristics

Project Managers

Integrity
Honesty
Flexible
Committed
Sense of humor

Deputies

Integrity
Keeps commitments
Courteous
Confident
Know what they know,
        & what they don't

Team Members/Others

Integrity	Patience
Honesty	Positive
Flexibility	Trusting

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

Interesting Outliers:

Penchant for action
Good sense of smell!
Doesn't chase rabbits
Proactive & Reactive (?)
Hands off & Available (?)
Follows the 7 Habits of highly effective people
Knows the difference between gangrene and amputation

Knows that 51% of being smart is knowing what's dumb

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- **How is this information *useful*?**

Critical Project Success Factors:

" Those managerial factors, listed in order of importance, that when present in the project's environment are most conducive to the achievement of a successful project."

Max Wideman

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- **How is this information *useful*?**

Perhaps,

   if we know the desired habits of NASA project managers, we can *select for*, *train*, or *otherwise instill* them in future project managers

What *are the Habits* of NASA Project Managers?

- So then, what's *next*?

Feedback from this group will help to identify,

First - whether there is agreement on the habits identified and,

Second - how to use these findings for improving NASA project manager identification/selection, and training?

**Effective project leaders are social architects
who can foster a climate of active participation
by involving people in all organizational levels
in the planning, formation, and execution of projects.**

Hans J. Thamhain

Project management is not about events, it is about people